**Yetunde Howell**

**ELED 310-Interview (Oral history)**

**12/2011**

**Full Name: Patrick Olusegun Abayomi Olowokere**

1. **When and where were you born? Ilesha, Nigeria.**
2. **Where did your family come from and how did your family come to live in the United States? We are from Ilesha, Nigeria. I came to the United States in 1975. I’ve been here for almost 37 years.**
3. **Were there other family members in the area? Who? Yes. My brother Joshua filed for me to come here. I was glad that I got the opportunity because living in Africa, you have the wrong impression or idea of America. I was told that the streets were paved in gold. I was so excited to come here. When I got here, I was shocked..not disappointed.**
4. **What was the house (apartment, farm, etc.) like? How many rooms? Bathrooms? Did it have electricity? Indoor plumbing? Telephones? I moved to Bronx, NY. A four bedroom apartment is what we lived in. My brother was married with two children. There was one bathroom for all of us to share. One telephone to share. There was indoor plumbing.**
5. **Were there any special items in the house that you remember? There was a Grand Father Coo Coo clock that sounded every hour. It drove me nuts!**
6. **What is your earliest childhood memory? My earliest childhood memory was running through the fields with my friends feeling free. We had fun but I always had dreams of coming to America.**
7. **Describe the personalities of your family members. My family members have very good personalities. It is easy to get along with everyone. We are very close and spend a lot of time together.**
8. **What kind of games did you play growing up? We loved to play a game called Ayo. The objective is to get the most seeds. The game board looks like an empty egg carton. The game starts by placing 4 seeds in each of the 12 cups on the board, and each player sits with 6 of the cups on their side of the board. Choose a player to start. For each turn, a player chooses a cup, takes all the seeds in that cup (it will the 4 seeds for the first player, but it may be more or less as the game continues), and goes around the board in a counterclockwise direction, planting one seed in each cup as they go. If your last seed lands in your opponent's cup, you can capture all the seeds in that cup, and add it to your bank. The game continues until one player cannot move, at which point, the one with the most seeds wins.**
9. **What was your favorite toy and why? I don’t remember playing with any particular toy.**
10. **What was your favorite thing to do for fun (movies, beach, etc.)? My favorite thing to do was to go to the beach with my family. We love the water.**
11. **Did you have family chores? What were they? Which was your least favorite? Yes, everyone had chores (4 brothers and 5 sisters). My parents worked and we went to school. After school, we cleaned the house and prepared dinner before my parents got home. The girls washed and ironed the clothes.**

1. **Did you receive an allowance? How much? Did you save your money or spend it? We did not get an allowance but we helped out in the neighborhood and our neighbors gave us money.**
2. **What was school like for you as a child? What were your best and worst subjects? Where did you attend grade school? High school? College? I loved school. I went to school in Nigeria all the way through high school. My favorite subjects were science and math. I dislike learning Yoruba, which was our native language. I preferred to read, write, and speak English. When I came to America, I attended college. I studied architecture.**
3. **What school activities and sports did you participate in? I was on the school soccer team. My parents loved to watch my brothers and I play. It was also their favorite sport. My father used to play with us on weekends.**
4. **Do you remember any fads from your youth? Popular hairstyles? Clothes? Bell bottom pants were “in” when I was younger. Also, I used to have a huge afro. Now, nothing is left. (laugh)**
5. **Who were your childhood heroes? My father was my hero. He worked so hard to provide for such a large family but he died young.**
6. **Did you have any pets? If so, what kind and what were their names? We had one dog and we named him Papingo. I don’t remember why and I don’t even know what it means.**
7. **What was your religion growing up? What church, if any, did you attend? My parents raised us as Pentecostals. We went to Christ Apostolic Church.**
8. **Were you ever mentioned in a newspaper? Yes. I ran in a marathon at Yankee Stadium years ago. I was photographed along with some of my coworkers.**
9. **Who were your friends when you were growing up? I don’t really socialize with too many people outside of my family but my good friends were Sunday and Jide. We went to school in Nigeria together and met up when we got to America. We are still good friends today.**
10. **Describe a typical family dinner. Did you all eat together as a family? Who did the cooking? What were your favorite foods? Rice, plantains, stew. We have many ethnic foods. We all sit at the table together and pray over our meal. My sisters did the cooking.**
11. **How were holidays (birthdays, Christmas, etc.) celebrated in your family? Did your family have special traditions? We would go to church on Christmas morning then come home to open presents. We also celebrated most of the Christian holidays as well as birthdays.**
12. **How is the world today different from what it was like when you were a child? The world seems to have gotten more angry and violent. Nobody seems to have time to relax. People are always in a rush.**
13. **Who was the oldest relative you remember as a child? What do you remember about them? My grandfather Bartholemew, my father’s father. I remember him taking us to the carnival every time they were in town.**
14. **Is there a naming tradition in your family, such as always giving the firstborn son the name of his paternal grandfather? No. I gave both of my sons my name. One is Patrick and the other is Olusegun.**
15. **Have any recipes been passed down to you from family members? No, but I’m sure my sisters have some. I learned to cook by watching them.**
16. **Are there any physical characteristics that run in your family? Most of us have big noses with a small nose bridge. Also, many of us are taller than average with athletic figures.**
17. **What was the full name of your spouse? Siblings? Parents? Victoria Aderonke Fapohunda(Wife). Joshua Jide Olowokere(bro), Charles Bode Olowokere(bro), Steven Kayode Olowokere(bro), James Oluseun Olowokere(bro), Janet Olowokere(sis), Funlola Olowokere(sis), Bimpe Olowokere(sis), Shola olowokere(sis), and Gbemi Olowokere(sis). My mother’s name was Cecilia Ojuolape Olowokere and my father’s name was Bartholemew Oluwabusayomi Olowokere.**
18. **When and how did you meet your spouse? What did you do on dates? I met my wife when she was in nursing school. She went to an all girls school and I attended an all boys school. Her school was having a dance and they invited our school. She was the only person I noticed because she was so beautiful. She was a bit sassy but I knew that she would be my wife. We went to parks for picnics, the movies, dinner, and I even invited her to my family’s house.**
19. **What was it like when you proposed (or were proposed to)? Where and when did it happen? How did you feel? I proposed to her in Nigeria. I asked her parents whether it was okay that I married their daughter. They agreed so I invited her over for dinner at my house. All of our friends were there. She didn’t suspect a thing. At the right moment, I got down on my knees, both knees, to ask her to be my best friend and wife forever. She said “YES”! I was not nervous at all because I knew that we had a great relationship and we talked about marriage in the past.**
20. **Where and when did you get married? We have a traditional wedding ceremony in Nigeria and then when we moved to America, we had a “White” wedding.**
21. **What memory stands out the most from your wedding day? I remember running late because I could find my shoes.**
22. **How would you describe your spouse? What do (did) you admire most about them? My wife is gentle and kind. She is very hard working and loving. I admire her strength and patience. She has excellent qualities.**
23. **What do you believe is the key to a successful marriage? Love, patience, and kindness. Oh yeah, and agreeing to do whatever your wife asks of you. (laugh)**
24. **How did you find out your were going to be a parent for the first time? She started getting nauseous all the time so we went to the doctor for confirmation.**
25. **Why did you choose your children's names? My oldest son’s English name is the same as mine. I named him after me but his Yoruba name is Babafemi which means “God loves me”. My oldest daughter is also named after me. Her English name is Patricia. Her Yoruba name is Yetunde which means “mother comes back”. You were born a week after your grandmother died and we believe she came back in you. My second daughter’s name is Margaret and her Yoruba name is Olufolakemi meaning “God takes care of me with wealth”. My youngest son is named after me also. His name is Emmanuel Olusegun meaning “God is victorious”.**
26. **What was your proudest moment as a parent? My proudest moments were watching all of my children being born. I also loved taking them to their first days of school.**
27. **What did your family enjoy doing together? We did almost everything together. We went on family vacations, the movies, meals, we went to amusement parks, picnics, we also like to exercise together, shopping, etc.**
28. **What was your profession and how did you choose it? I have always been into art. I am fascinated with how buildings are constructed. This is why I chose architecture.**
29. **Of all the things you learned from your parents, which do you feel was the most valuable? The most valuable lesson was to respect and honor family.**
30. **What accomplishments were you the most proud of? I am proud of my lovely family. What is the one thing you most want people to remember about you? My free spiritedness and love for people.**